

GEO MILEV

SLEEP
TERM
BER

FOREIGN
LANGUAGES PRESS



G E O M I L E V

September

Translated from the Bulgarian by
PETER TEMPEST

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
Sofia — 1961

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FOREWORD

Within months of writing the poem you shall read, the young poet Geo Milev was strangled by fascist police thugs and his body thrown to rot in a ditch near Sofia.

The grounds for his guilt then are today his claim to immortality.

This poem is sprinkled with the poet's pure blood, warmed by his last breath.

These verses are not just a declaration of the poet's faith, passionate feeling and devotion to his people and their struggles. They are much more. Because few are the poets in the world who have given their lives for their words to become prophecy.

Geo Milev perished because he wrote this poem. It laid bare the bloodthirsty face of fascism, branded its brutality. In verse of fire it sang of the people's revolt and of the awesome tragic end of their uprising. At the same time this poem sounded the alarm, lashed the conscience of Europe.

What was happening in that distant Balkan country, so small it is lost in the broad pages of the atlas?

Bulgaria, June 1923. With the connivance of all the bourgeois parties a fascist group under notorious "butcher" Tsankov seized a favourable moment to take power. The Agrarian Party's government was overthrown and Alexander Stamboliiski, its leader, assassinated.

Faced with mounting police persecution, Communists and Agrarians united their forces and called a mass armed uprising against the government on September 23.

And the people rose! In some districts the hard-pressed working people had already taken to arms — such as they could get.

It was an angry, surging storm of protest; it was a planned revolutionary action in the name of a workers' and peasants' government. Georgi Dimitrov, already a veteran Communist leader in Bulgaria, was the acknowledged head of the people's forces.

In the first days the insurgent workers and peasants took control over whole areas, especially in the North-West, where Dimitrov and Kolarov directed operations. In many places the soldiers joined the rebels. In many villages local government passed into the hands of worker-peasant committees, which hoisted the red and orange banners of Communist and Agrarian unity.

But it was an unequal struggle against well-armed and well-drilled forces of the state.

The rising was crushed in rivers of blood and with mountains of corpses. The Maritsa River, flowing through the fertile plain of Thrace past the ancient city of Plovdiv, was scarlet from the slaughter.

In this winter of defeat the poet Geo Milev wrote:

"A hurricane has passed over our land such as neither we nor our fathers recall. It has shaken the deepest defiles in the Balkans and the remotest mountain valleys. The blood of brothers has spattered the grass and brushwood, the brain marrow of shattered skulls has stuck to the walls. The shrieks of men and the wailing of mothers strike high heaven. The winter fields are black with mourning scarves."

In the night of terror, so powerfully evoked in his poem, Geo Milev fearlessly declared with high courage and conscience: "We shall stand where the people are: with the People, among the People."

These resolute words were spoken not by a peasant with clay on his boots, not by a worker with machine-torn muscular hands, but by a young and exquisite poet, an acute theatre critic and gifted artist, a man not yet in his thirties, whose life from his earliest schooldays had been devoted to intellectual pursuits

Born in the provincial town of Stara Zagora, renowned for its sound literary tradition, eldest child in a family of schoolteachers, Geo Milev grew up in an artistic and cultural environment. His father ran a bookshop and dabbled in publishing. As a boy young Geo edited handwritten school magazines, produced a witty satirical album of caricatures of His Royal Majesty — the imported foreign-born King Ferdinand.

An eager inquiring youth with a zest for his literary craft, is it surprising that he fell in love with the delicate, elegant poetry of Verlaine and the Symbolists?

For a manuscript collection of his own verse the youth of 16 chose the lines by the Russian poet Baratynsky:

**Uncaring, I declare myself well pleased
Repaid with sound for sound, with dreams for dreams.**

After two years studying literature at Sofia University, Geo Milev lived in Berlin for a further two years reading, writing. There he publicly defended modern (Symbolist) poetry against its detractors. But at the same time his thirst for great poetry and literature drew him to Heine's "Silesian Weavers", Rouget de Lisle's "Marseillaise", the free-spirited verses of Pushkin, which he translated into Bulgarian.

In the summer of 1914 a young man of 19 with an intent serious air arrived in London. Through the quiet parks and by the riverside he strolled, down the narrow streets flanked by the tall City banks. Eagerly he admired the treasures of museum and art gallery.

But listen to his verdict in a letter written to his father from the big city:

"I have already been almost all over London. My impressions: horror, America, noise, speculation, chilliness, cold, cash, avarice, poverty"

Still more truly and poetically he expressed his condemnation of capitalist England, the hub of world capital, in the poem "Inferno":

**Below there
Beneath heavy layers of fog
Flows the grey River Thames
And spreads far,
Dredges, drags
From all oceans, all countries
The dregs of the world —
Universal grim poverty.**

While in London Geo Milev was frequently to be seen at lectures and public meetings. One Sunday, glancing through *The Observer*, he noticed that Emile Verhaeren, the distinguished Belgian poet, was in town.

It was an exciting discovery. For several years Geo Milev had admired the national poet of Belgium and he had translated into Bulgarian several of his poems. He inquired of *The Observer* and was given the poet's address: 18 Matheson Road, Kensington.

One afternoon the young Bulgarian called and presented his card. He found Verhaeren at home, comfortably and informally dressed. At once the two poets were at ease. Geo Milev stressed the affinity of the Bulgarian people and the people of Flanders, as Verhaeren had depicted them in the "sad plains" which "stretch to the North", "field folk" who "drink the rain, swallow the wind" and "smoke the mist". With warmth and feeling Geo Milev compared Verhaeren's descriptions with the land and atmosphere of Thrace.

"Vous êtes plein d'ardeur!" Verhaeren exclaimed.

From then on they were close friends. They corresponded for many months until the Belgian poet's tragic death.

Recalling their first meeting, Geo Milev was to write later that he considered Verhaeren his "teacher" in poetry and his work "an example and an ideal".

Again in Sofia, Geo Milev began intensive literary activity. He published five "lyric leaflets" — translations from Mallarmé, Dehmel, Verhaeren, Verlaine and Nietzsche, dedicating each to the leading Symbolist poets of the day: N. Liliev, Teodor Trayanov, Dimcho Debelyanov, Lyudmil Stoyanov and Nikolai Rainov.

But life was cruel and demanding. On the outbreak of war Geo Milev was sent to the front. In April 1917 he received a severe head wound, losing the sight of an eye. He went to Berlin for a series of operations. There he was a witness of the mass struggles of the German workers. In the wake of the Russian Revolution the proletariat of war-starved Berlin was gripped with revolutionary fervour. While Geo Milev was walking the boulevards of the hungry capital, in January 1919 the inspired leaders of the working class, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were assassinated.

In Berlin Geo Milev contributed articles and poems to "Aktion", the literary journal round which were then grouped writers such as Johannes Becher and Franz Werfel.

Within a few months of returning to Sofia Geo Milev launched his own Symbolist literary magazine "Vezni" (Scales). At the same time he wrote dramatic criticism, and produced plays by Strindberg and Toller at theatres in Sofia.

In "Vezni" he published extracts from his translation of "The Twelve", the revolutionary poem by the Russian Symbolist poet Alexander Blok. In an article marking Blok's death in 1921 he spoke of "Russia transformed into a symbol which blazes in front of us, terrifying, bearing storm and salvation."

Immense was the impact of Mayakovsky, the poet-herald of Communism. "How much that was new came pouring into our midst then!" Geo Milev wrote of Mayakovsky's poem "150,000,000".

In Sofia, as in Berlin, these were years of a great upsurge of the working class movement. The Bulgarian Communists were already a major political force in the country, making striking electoral advances. There was a mood of militancy in the co-operative societies and the trade unions, as the working people grappled with the problems of a war-ravaged economy, managed by a ruthlessly exploiting bourgeoisie.

Geo Milev gave to be published at the Communist Party publishing house in Sofia an anthology of revolutionary poetry from many lands, which he had translated.

But in 1923 the dark night of fascism descended. There followed the mighty challenge of the September revolt and the bitter bloody rout of the revolutionary masses.

"We intellectuals cannot, must not remain dispassionate to what the people experienced in September — not only from common humanity, but above all from jealousy for the people's cause," declared the poet.

"The ivory tower, the refuge of poetry and hiding-place of poets, lies crumbled in ruins. From the dust of dreams, from the ruin of fantasies the poet emerges — stunned, astounded, no longer blind — and confronts the bloodstained face of the people, his people"

With this manifesto Geo Milev launched a new literary magazine "Plamuk" (Flame) in January 1924. It was in this magazine that he published his poem "September".

"Plamuk" was an outspoken and fearless journal. Born in the oppressive atmosphere of fascism, it was a "flame" which seared the master-brute. In the teeth of the police censorship Geo Milev with passion and scorn flung the proud words: "Fools, no way has yet been devised to destroy a people, still less a people who think!"

The poem "September" was created not in the quiet idyll of an ivory tower. The stirring challenging verses were written when tumult and terror were shaking the country.

It was poetry marching in step with events, comrade-in-arms of the revolt. The poet's words, like bullets, had true and straight aim — at the heart of fascism.

**The people,
Pricked
By a thousand knives,
Dulled,**

Degraded,
Poorer than beggars,
Deprived
Of brain
And nerve,
Arose
From the darkness and fear
Of their lives
— And wrote with their blood
FREEDOM!

The red banners fell, battle-torn, in the rebel's hands.

But the poet raised and held high fresh red banners, indestructible banners, which bullets could not assail. They were strong-winged, thrilling words, signalling the people's hardships and pains, asserting their faith and radiant hopes:

From the boundlessly high
Bridge of the sky
With levers and ropes
We'll bring down heaven,
The land of our hopes,
Down
To the sorrowing
Blood-soaked earth.

It was in the gentle sad month of autumn that the poem "September" was published. The poet could have strolled through Sofia's beautiful parks, in the manner of generations of poets he could have mourned the transient beauty of dead leaves.

But it was for the numberless fallen sons of Bulgaria he grieved. And as he wrote, his own heart bled.

The poem with its whirl of words and images is not the eccentric gesture of an intellectual shouting on the sidelines. For such boldness in poetry people paid with their lives.

Into the poem Geo Milev put all he had — the beauty and precision of poetic expression he had acquired from his long and exacting apprenticeship to his craft, the power and drive of the truly great poetry of the classical and civic poets, the lucidity of Pushkin, the tenderness of Heine, the revolutionary surge of Mayakovsky.

The symbols which in the hands of other poets could be mere idle fantasy, empty intimacy, from the hands of Geo Milev were given to the people.

Describing the day of revolt as it dawned with splendour and hope, the poet wrote :

**Night dispersed as the hills
Glistened.
The sunflowers
Turned to the sun!**

The sunflower plant, source of beauty and nourishment, is part of the pathetic armoury of the insurgent peasants :

**Shouldering bundles in tatters,
Gripping — not glittering sabres,
But common sticks,
Peasants with stakes,
Cudgels,
Goads,
Axes,
Choppers,
Pitchforks,
Hoes,
Scythes
And sunflowers
— Young and old —
Down from every direction behold
They came . . .**

And when the troops' volleys rang out

The sunflowers tumbled in dust.

Those who place a premium on exquisite art and purity of style may frown at so much blood and brawn, at Geo Milev's heroes

**Hand
On hammer,
Covered in soot, sparks and ashes,
Hand on sickle,
Numbed by the cold and humid soil,
Sons and daughters of toil . . .**

But the poet was writing the raw truth of his tragic time. He knew well that not the manicured officers and well-washed bankers were the true patriots, not the poets with their canes, idling away the hours in coffeeshop talk, not the "geniuses" and "bright boys", but the

Commonfolk,
Landless,
Illiterate,
Boors...

Thousands of Communists and Agrarians fought and perished in the great popular uprising. Geo Milev, who was not a Communist and who held no party card, accepted the revolutionary aim and found stimulus and inspiration in the political slogans of his time.

One day in 1925 the poet disappeared. The issues of "Plamuk" with his greatest poem were confiscated and destroyed by the police. The young editor with the familiar lock of hair concealing his artificial eye was no longer to be met in the streets of Sofiā.

The poet shared the anonymous fate of the thousands who vanished in the bloody aftermath of September.

For twenty long years his unmarked grave was untraced.

The fascist brutes calculated that a silent grave and banned journal would erase all memory of the people's poet.

But the words once uttered could not be arrested. They spread among the people to whom they were dedicated, giving hope and courage. "September shall be May", the whisper went round, and the words were the slogan of the future, when the workers' holiday of May would be, the gay festival of the entire liberated people.

The poem that had been banned was published in Paris by emigres and smuggled into Bulgaria. There it was laboriously copied, duplicated circulated by young and enthusiastic hands.

Many autumns passed and by a coincidence of history it was again the month of September when the Bulgarian people rose in might against their oppressors. On September 9, 1944, as the liberating Red Army drove into Bulgaria, the people's government of the Fatherland Front was established.

As the poet had foretold, September became May.

* * *

This year and every year in the early days of June, when rich cornfields ripen in the valleys and the clear night sky glows with the fires of new blast furnaces, thousands upon thousands of young and old take to the hills to gather at Vola peak in the heart of the Balkan mountains. It was there that over eighty years ago Hristo Botev, Bulgaria's national poet, perished rifle in hand, in brave struggle against Turkish overlords. There today the people kneel and commemorate the sacrifice of all who died fighting for freedom.

One by one the names are recited of fallen heroes. Alongside the names of revolutionaries, workers and peasants, rings out the name of Geo Milev.

In the serene night of heroic remembrance, beside the camp fires, the old songs of revolt are sung, hymns of the revolution. And then young people with the pulse of the new Socialist Bulgaria declaim Geo Milev's "September".

And the poet lives again — he sits in the warmth of the crackling logs, embraces the sons and grandsons of the Septembrists who fell in the duel with fascism. He is there amid the magic mountains, among the youth of Bulgaria.

For death cannot touch those whom the people cherish.

PETER TEMPEST

SEPTEMBER

From the dead womb of night
The age-old spite of the slave is born
His passionate hate
Is great.

Where vells of mist are drawn.

From valleys in darkness
Before the dawn,
From all hills round,
From barren scrub,
From hungry ground,
From homes of mud,
From village.

Town,

Secluded courtyard,

Cot and cottage,

Siding, store,

Barn,

Farml,

Flourmill,

Loom,

Laths:

By road and lane,

Passing

Scree, ravine, and hoarder,

1

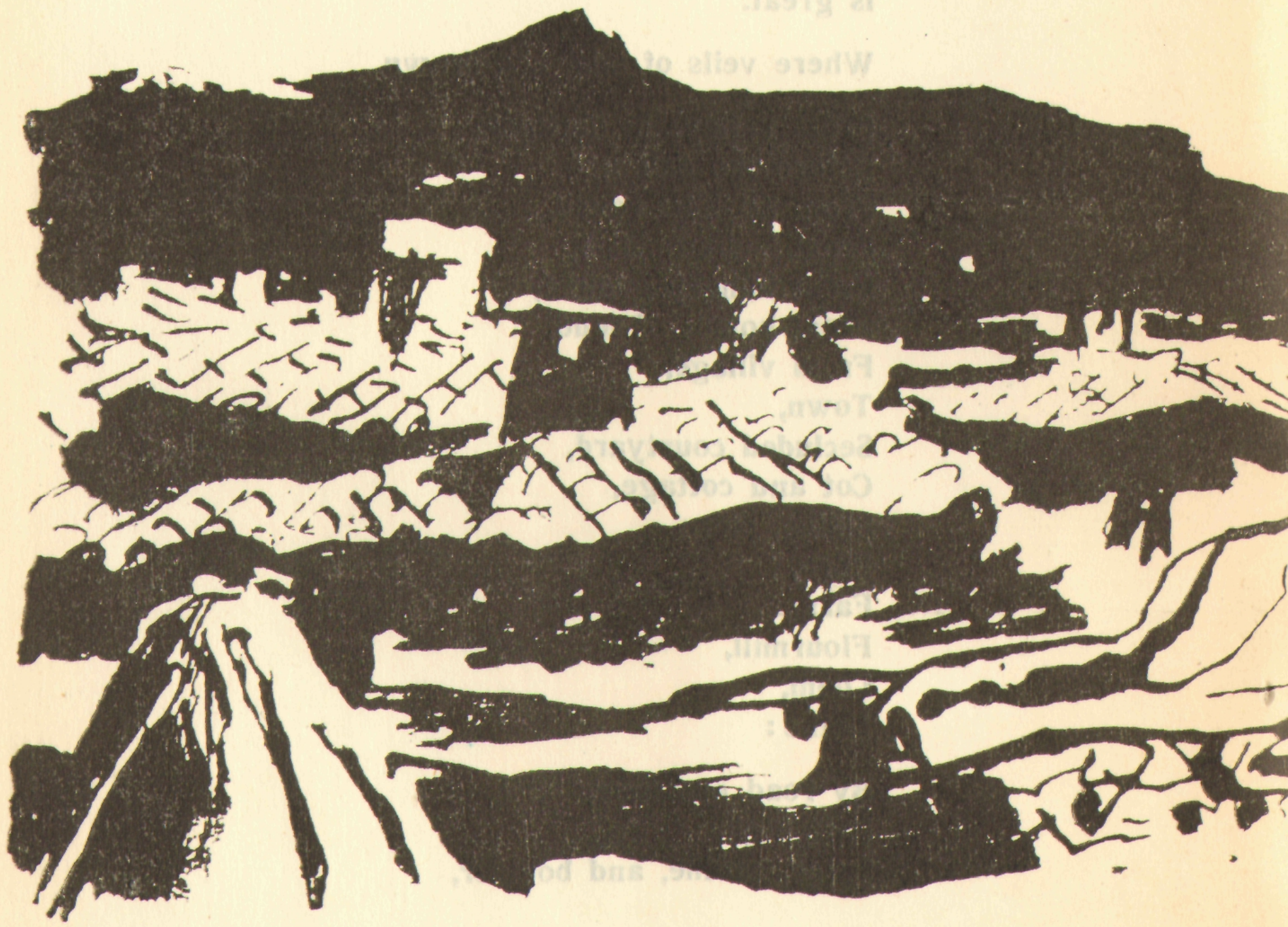
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The age-old spite of the slave is born :
His passionate hate
Is great.

Where veils of mist are drawn.

From valleys in darkness
Before the dawn,
From all hills round,
From barren scrub,
From hungry ground,
From homes of mud,
From village,
Town,
Secluded courtyard,
Cot and cottage,
Siding, store,
Barn,
Farm,
Flourmill,
Loom,
Lathe :

By road and lane,
Past high
Scree, ravine, and boulder,

By ridge
And shoulder,
Through humming coppice
And autumn yellow-leaf forest,
Through stones
And water,
Swollen stream,
Meadow,
Orchard,
Vineyard,
Field,
Sheepfold,
Brambles,
Stubble burnt black,
Thorns



And sodden marshland track:
Ragged,
Muddy,
Hungry,
Haggard,
Toughened by toil untold,
Roughened by heat and cold,
Blunted,
Stunted,
Covered in grime,
Long-haired,
Feet bared,
Scarred,
Untutored,
Untamed,



Angry,
To madness
Inflamed

— Bearing no roses,
No songs,
No music, no gongs,
No clarinet, sidedrum and drone,
No trumpet and horn, no trombon:

Shouldering bundles in tatters,
Gripping — not glittering sabres,
But common sticks,
Peasants with stakes,
Cudgels,
Goads,
Axes,
Choppers,





Pitchforks,
Hoes,
Scythes
And sunflowers
— Young and old —
Down from every direction behold
They came
— A blind herd
Of beasts let loose,
Numberless
Thundering bulls —
Calling,
Bawling
(Behind them a stoneblack sky)
Without order
Forward
They flew
 Irrepressible,
 Terrible,
 Great :
 THE PEOPLE!

2

Night dispersed as the hills
Glistened.
The sunflowers
Turned to the Sun!
Slumbering dawn
Awoke
To the clatter of guns:
From the distant
Slopes
In leaden line
Mad
Bullets
Flew
With deadly whine.
The elephant jaws
Of cannon
Roared . . .



Fear it you must.
The sunflowers tumbled in dust.

3

"The people's voice
Is the voice of God."

The people,
Pricked
By a thousand knives,
Dulled,
Degraded,
Poorer than beggars,
Deprived
Of brain
And nerve,
Arose



From the darkness and fear
Of their lives
— And wrote with their blood
FREEDOM!

Chapter One:
September.

— The people's voice —

— The voice of God —

O God!

Grant strength to the sacred task
Of hands grown hard and dark from toil:
Infuse great courage in hearts, we ask,
In such turmoil:

For Thou wouldst wish no man a slave
And now — we vow by our own grave



That it is we shall resurrect
Man free on Earth
— So with a will
We face our death.
For beyond :
The Land of Canaan blooms,
The Land of Truth
Promised
To us —
Spring everlasting of living dreams . . .
We believe it! We know it! We wish it!
God be with us!

4

September! September!
O month of blood!
Of rising
And rout!
Muglîzh was the first,
Then Stára
 and } Zagóra
 Nóva }

Chirpán,
Lom,
Ferdinánd,
Berkóvitsa,
Sarámbey,
Médkovets

(With Andrei the Priest)

— Villages, towns
From West to East.

5

The people arose
— Hand
On hammer,
Covered in soot, sparks and ashes
— Hand on sickle,
Numbed by the cold and humid soil,
Sons and daughters of toil,

Silently bearing it —

(Not geniuses,
Bright boys,
Zealots,
Debaters,
Demagogues,
Businessmen,
Aviators,
Pedants,
Authors,
Generals,
Proprietors
Of cafes and bars,
Bandsmen
And men of the Black Guards)

But

Peasants,
Workers,
Commonfolk,
Landless,
Illiterate,
Boors,
Hooligans,
Boars

— A rabble like cattle :

Thousands,

Masses,

The people :

Thousands of faiths

— One faith in the people's cause,

Thousands of wills

— One will to obtain better laws,

Thousands of turbulent hearts

— In each heart a raging fire,

Thousands of toil-blackened hands

— In the reddening range of expanse

Eagerly raising on high

Red

Banners

Which spread

Far
And wide
Over a land in the grip of alarm and revolt,
Ferocious fruit of the storm:

Thousands —
Masses —
The people.

6

Over the homely hills,
Their navels turned
To the sky
And eternal Sun,
Lightning
Flashed
— Thunder

Smote
Straight to the heart
The giant
Hundred-year
Oak.
Hill upon hill
Reflected the echo
Afar
Over peak and crest
To steep valleys,
In stone crannies
Where adders asleep
In coils rest
On hot couches,
To serpents' caves
And dragon lairs
And _witches' hollow-tree haunts.

— The echoes mixed
With the distant echo:
Echoes and rumble
Of waterfalls,
Torrents,
Gushing rivers,

Rushing,
Tumbling,
Thundering madly
To the abyss.

7
The tragedy begins! —

8
Those at the head
Fell in blood.

A barrage of lead
Met the rebel flood.
The flags fluttered
In shreds.

The mountain boomed
There on high
The near and distant horizon
Darkened with lines
Of men

— In black rows
Growing:

The paid, trained soldiers
And snarling police —
Each one of them knowing:
"The Fatherland
Summons its sons!"

Exquisite:

But — what land is it? —

The ferocious bark
Of the guns . . .

Those at the head
Fell in blood.

Beyond the faraway
Hills
Artillery pealed.

Towns
And villages
Reeled.
Slopes,
Hollows,
Roads
Were strewn
With blood-soaked corpses.
Guards drew swords
And rode in pursuit
Of routed peasants
— Finished them, shot them
With shrapnel and mortar,
Fleeing in terror in every direction,
Hounded into their homes
And there, where the eaves hang low,
Felled to the ground at a blow
From blood-wet knives
To the shrieks
Of horrified mothers,
Children and wives . . .

9

The army advanced.
Under the menacing clatter of shrapnel .
Even the boldest
Flinched :
In despair
Bare hands were raised in the air.
Fear without glory
Froze on each face —
Eyes beyond suffering.
“Every man
Fend for himself !”
Now by all routes
Regiment follows on regiment
— Infantry,
Cavalry,
Cannon.



Drums
Beat the attack.
Panic
Soars higher
Over the torn
Red banners,
Wielding its whiplash of fire.

There
As dismay increased
Alone
Andrei
The Priest
To epic boldness
Inspired
Fired
Round after round
From the famous cannon —
At last:
With the shout of
"Death to Satan."
In fury magnificent
Turned about
His cannon:
Dispatched
The final shot
Straight

— at the House of God,
Where many a psalm he had rendered . . .

And then he surrendered.
"Hang the Red Priest on the spot!
"No cross! No grave! Let him rot!"

He was dragged to a telegraph pole.
Close by stood the hangman
And captain.
The rope
On the ground.
Under the bitter
Chill sky



The Balkans

Frowned.

The priest stood full height,

Massive figure of man,

All

Calm as granite —

No regret,

No remembrances —

Christ's cross on his chest

And eyes fixed on the crest

Of the distant hills,

On the future . . .

"Butchers!

"You lower your cowardly eyes

"In the hour a man dies!

"But — one death —

"What does it mean?

"Amen!"

Tight-lipped

He spat.

Then rapidly slipped

Himself.

The noose on his neck

And

Not glancing heavenward

— Hung —

With teeth gripping

Tongue:

Majestic.

Magnificent,

Matchless!

10

Autumn

Flew by

In wild havoc

Of wailing and gales and deep night.

The storm clouds seethed

On darkening hills

— Gloom and glitter
And crows' croaking flight —
The Earth's back
Sweated blood.
Every hovel and home
Shuddered in cowering fear.
Death rode here!
Loud as thunder
The din
Split the heavens asunder.

11

Then came
The worst horror.
Smitten in fury
The alarum bell struck at their hearts
— Struck, smote, rang . . .
Darkness dropped to the ground,
Cast a dense, dread blockade
All round.
Death
— The bloodthirsty witch
Lurking in eddies of mist —
Shrieked
As she reached
Out through the night:
With endlessly long withered arms
Seizing, squeezing
Terrified hearts
At the back of each wall.
O night of nameless deeds!
— Both secret, and seen:
Again village greens carry scarlet stains.
Death screams in a severed throat are caught.
Again cruel clashing of shackle and chains
And the prison cells crowded.
In echoing courts
Of barracks and jails
Volleys ring to command.

Doors are locked,
Strangers knock.
In the porch with a gun
Sprawls a dying son.
Father hung.
Sister raped.
Uprooted from villages
Peasants are followed by troops
In grim convoy,
To be shot :
The order : "Halt !"
"Prepare to fire !"

The bolts clatter :

Ku

Klux

Klan —

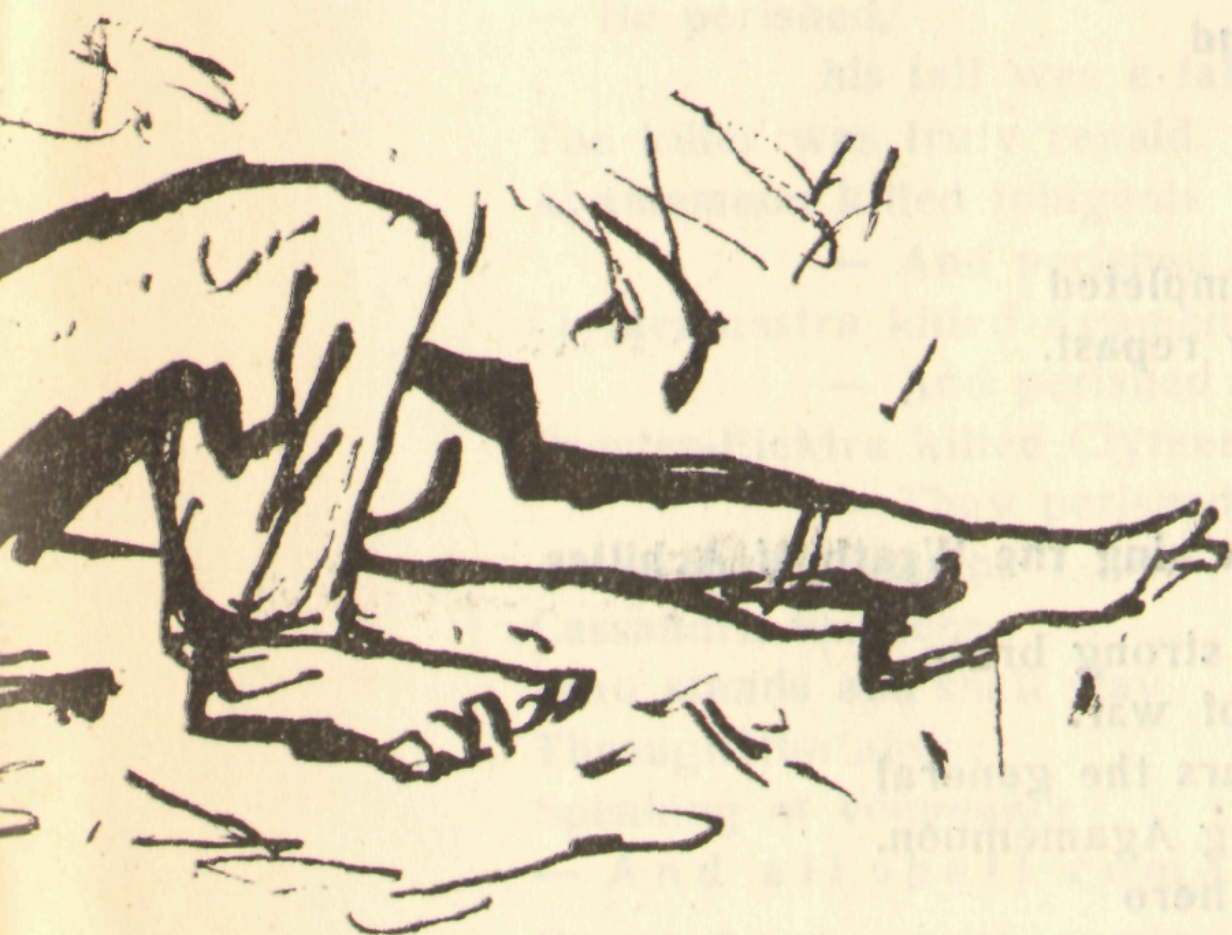
"Fire !"

— Bullets spatter.



Ten bodies
Heavily
Plunge from the bank
Into the turbid grey River Maritsa,
Whose crimson flow
Carries away
Her sons in sorrow.
In distant deserted streets
Drums thud
As a band repeats:
"Maritsa murmurs . . ."
River of blood.

In the trampled
Thistle-grown fields
Where the grasses run wild
Roll scarlet heads
Defaced by knives.



Gallows outspread black arms
(Ghosts in a mist of death).
Ceaseless the merciless march of the axe
Against bone.
Villages blaze
Beyond the horizon.
Blood runs in torrents.
The death pyres' hot flame
Sacrilegiously_licks
The foot
Of God's
Throne.
Live flesh roasts.
In high horror
The heavenly hosts
Exclaim
— A savage hosanna to God —

The end.

The hurricane ceased,
The storm
Stopped at last:
Over the land
Came
Peace
And silence.
The gods completed
Their bloody repast.

12

O Muse, now sing the Wrath of Achilles . . .

Achilles the strong brute,
The demon of war.
For long years the general
Of H. M. King Agamemnon.
Achilles the hero
With row upon row
Of crosses and medals and ribbons . . .

A pillar
Of order and peace
In the land . . .

But today
We no longer believe in heroes
— Not theirs, nor our own.

Troy burned, the city was razed.
Priam and Hecuba perished . . .
Achilles triumphs . . .
“What’s Hecuba to him?”
His brute savage heart
Does not hear
The wailing of mothers distraught
Over nameless graves sprinkled with blood,
So many
They cannot be numbered.
“What’s Hecuba to him?”
Achilles the hero.
Achilles was great.
God-sent scourge of God.
But Achilles shall perish in wrath and cursing.
— He perished,

his fall was a fall of shame:
The killer was truly repaid.
Agamemnon killed Iphigenia
— And perished:
Clytaemnestra killed Agamemnon
— And perished:
Orestes-Elektra killed Clytaemnestra
— They perished . . .

Alone there remains
Cassandra the seer,
Who stands and shall stay
Through the ages:
Speaking of vengeance
— And all shall come true.
Constant amusement, pastime, caprice
Of the gods.

Perpetual bloom of gods' fury,
To whom all death is a jest,
All mourning revelry.
Death, murder and blood —
For how long must it be?
All-powerful Zeus,

Jupiter,

Ahuramazda,

Indra,

Tot,

Ra,

Jehovah,

Sabaoth:

— Reply!

From the smoke of the fires
Rise
Assailing the ears
The cries of the killed,
The roars
Of the numberless martyrs
On blazing wood pyres

— Who

Has betrayed our faith?

Reply!

You say nothing?

Don't know?

— We do!

Look:

With one bound

We leap into Heaven:

DOWN WITH GOD!

— Heave a bomb at your heart

And take Heaven by storm:

DOWN WITH GOD!

From your throne

Send you dead

Down to the starless
Ironclad depths
Of the world's great abyss —

DOWN WITH GOD!

From the boundlessly high
Bridge of the sky
With levers and ropes
We'll bring down Heaven,
The land of our hopes,
Down
To the sorrowing
Blood-soaked
Earth.

All that the poets and philosophers wrote
Shall come true!
— No god! No master!
The month of September shall turn into May:
The life that men lead
From that day shall proceed
Ever upward, upward:
Earth shall be Heaven—
It shall!

